

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

By way of this Amendment, new Claims 10-23 are presented for consideration. Thus, the claims currently pending in this application are Claims 1-23, with Claims 1, 9, 18 and 21 being the only independent claims.

Claim 9 has been placed in independent form by incorporating the subject matter recited in original independent Claim 1. Claim 9, as well as all of the other original claims in this application, were rejected as being anticipated by the disclosure contained in U.S. Patent No. 5,595,697 to *Wada et al.* The Official Action indicates that the sealing device illustrated in Fig. 14 of *Wada et al.* includes all of the features recited in original Claim 9 (considered together with the subject matter set forth in Claim 1). It appears that the subject matter recited in original Claim 9 may not have been fully considered.

Claim 9 recites, in combination with the features set forth in independent Claim 1, that the support is substantially L-shaped in radial section and comprises a flange portion and a sleeve-shaped portion, with the sleeve-shaped portion of the support being substantially coaxial with the sleeve-shaped annular sealing lip. In addition, Claim 9 recites that the annular sealing lip extends axially on the opposite side to the flange portion of the support to a length greater than the axial extension of the sleeve-shaped portion of the support. As discussed in the last paragraph of the written description, this arrangement helps ensure a relatively easy and correct assembly of the seal.

Looking at the sealing device illustrated in Fig. 14 of *Wada et al.*, it is rather apparent that the resin seal lip 163, which is said to correspond to the claimed annular sealing lip, does not extend axially to a length greater than the axial extension of the outer cylindrical portion 161 of the reinforcing ring 157. Indeed, just the opposite is true. It is thus submitted that the claimed sealing device recited in independent Claim 9 cannot be anticipated by the disclosure contained in *Wada et al.*

The claims which depend from Claim 9 are also allowable at least by virtue of their dependence from allowable independent Claim 9.

To more clearly differentiate the composite seal defined in independent Claim 1 over the interpreted disclosure contained in *Wada et al.*, Claim 1 has been amended to define that when in use, the elastomer forming the pressure element does not contact the sealing surface of the second member. As can be seen with reference to the illustrated embodiment of the composite seal shown in the drawing figure of this application, the elastomer material forming the pressure element 21 does not contact the sealing surface 11 of the second member 2.

This arrangement is to be contrasted with the sealing device illustrated in Fig. 14 of *Wada et al.* where the material forming the elastic seal lip 158 is specifically adapted to contact the outer surface of the shaft 152. The sealing device disclosed in *Wada et al.* is specifically designed so that the elastic sealing lip 158 contacts the shaft 152 to provide one seal region while the seal lip 163 also contacts the shaft 152 to provide another seal region. It is thus believed that the composite seal recited in independent Claim 1, as well as

dependent Claims 2-8, is also patentably distinguishable over the disclosure contained in *Wada et al.*

New independent Claim 18 defines that the composite seal includes, inter alia, an annular pressure element that is fixed to the second lateral surface of the annular sealing lip. As also defined in independent Claim 18, the second lateral surface of the annular sealing lip is opposite the first lateral surface of the sealing lip and faces in use the first member. This fixation of the annular pressure element to the second lateral surface of the annular sealing lip is once again quite different from the sealing device illustrated in Fig. 14 of *Wada et al.* As discussed in column 10, lines 33-38 of *Wada et al.*, the elastic seal lip 158 and the resin seal lip 163 are separated from each other so as to be capable of individually moving. More specifically, *Wada et al.* states at the top of column 11 that the region of the elastic seal lip 158/resin seal lip 163 interface identified by the two-dot chain line in Fig. 14 represents the region that is not bonded. *Wada et al.* states that the elastic seal lip 158 and the resin seal lip 163 are separated from each other in the outlines region to allow the elastic seal lip 163 to follow small projections and pits on the surface of the shaft 152 as well as small irregular movements of the shaft.

It is thus clear that the sealing device described in *Wada et al.* does not include an annular pressure element fixed to the second lateral surface of the annular sealing lip (i.e., the surface of the annular sealing lip which faces the first member in use) in the same manner as defined in independent Claim 18. Thus, the composite seal recited in independent Claim 18, as well as Claims 19 and 20, is also allowable.

Finally, new independent Claim 21 is directed to a method of connecting an annular pressure element to an annular sealing lip to form part of a composite seal having the claimed features recited in Claim 21. The claimed method involves depositing an adhesion promoter on the second lateral surface of the annular sealing lip, forming the annular pressure element on the second lateral surface of the annular sealing lip and curing the annular pressure element together with the annular sealing lip. This method, which is supported by the description near the bottom of page six and the top of page seven of the application, is not at all disclosed in *Wada et al.* Accordingly, the claimed method recited in independent Claim 21 and dependent Claims 22 and 23, is also allowable.

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application, the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: July 9, 2003